

STATE SENATOR • JIM BARCIA • 31ST DISTRICT

Barcia Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 16, 2003

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BARCIA AND MEYER CALL ON U.S. TRADE NEGOTIATORS TO PROTECT MICHIGAN'S SUGAR BEET INDUSTRY

(LANSING)—State Senator Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) and Rep. Tom Meyer (R-Bad Axe) introduced resolutions in the state legislature today to encourage United States trade negotiators to protect our nation's sugar industry and not support the elimination of the tariff rate quota.

“The sugar beet industry is a vital contributor to our state's economy,” said Sen. Barcia. “Michigan accounted for nearly 11 percent of the total domestic sugar production in 2002. The Monitor Sugar Company and the Michigan Sugar Company, a grower-owned cooperative, contributed \$300 million in base economic impact to the local and state economy. Eliminating the tariff rate quota would cause irreparable harm to Michigan's economy and put many people out of work.”

The Senate and House resolutions urge U.S. trade negotiators not to agree to any provisions in any bilateral or regional negotiations that are detrimental to the United States sugar policy or that threaten the sugar industry. Sugar beets are grown on 190,000 acres in 18 counties in Michigan. In 2002, Michigan produced 900 million pounds of pure sugar for the domestic market.

“Michigan’s sugar beet industry has a century-long history of contributing to our local, state and national economy,” said Rep. Meyer. “Protecting its future, and the future of over 2,000 sugar industry employees’ jobs, is among my top priorities. I beseech the U.S. trade negotiators to support our vital U.S. sugar industry and prevail against the elimination of the tariff rate quota.”

Both resolutions were introduced today and referred to Senate and House committees for consideration.

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